

Claims

1. A method (300) of providing location based services using a wireless communication system (100, 200) that facilitates communication to and/or from a plurality of communication units (250-262), the method characterised by the step of:
 - transmitting a wireless message (220), from a mobile service provider (112) to a number of communication devices in a location (210), wherein said wireless message indicates a service to be provided by said mobile service provider (112) at said location (210).
- 15 2. The method (300) of providing location based services according to Claim 1, the method further characterised by the step of:
 - registering an interest in said service by said number of communication devices such that said wireless message (220) is transmitted to said devices.
- 25 3. The method (300) of providing location based services according to Claim 2, wherein said step of registering an interest in said service by said number of communication devices is specific to a particular geographic location or a location identified by a postcode.
- 30 4. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any preceding Claim, wherein said message includes contact details for said mobile service

provider (112), the method further characterised by the steps of:

receiving said wireless message at a number of communication devices; and

5 contacting, by one or more users of said communication devices, said mobile service provider (112) in response to receiving said wireless message, for example to accept a service offered by said mobile service provider (112).

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5. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any preceding Claim, wherein said step of transmitting comprises the step of:

transmitting said wireless message to a serving
15 intermediate device (230).

6. The method (300) of providing location based services according to Claim 5, the method further characterised by the step of:

20 broadcasting (240), by said serving intermediate device (230), a message to said number of communication units (250-262) within a location area indicating an availability of said mobile service provider (112).

25 7. The method (300) of providing location based services according to Claim 6 when dependent upon Claim 2, the method further characterised by the step of:

accessing a database, by said intermediate server 230, to identify a group of users (250-262) that have
30 registered an interest in said service provided by said mobile service provider (112).

8. The method (300) of providing location based services according to Claim 7, wherein said database contains location information for a number of said users (250-262) such that one or more of said user (250-262) 5 are informed by said serving intermediate device (230) when said mobile service provider (112) enters a communication cell or geographic or post code area matching said location.

10 9. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of preceding Claims 5 to 8 when dependent upon Claim 2, wherein said step of registering comprises the step of:
subscribing, by a user interested in said service 15 provided by said mobile service provider, to a network operator or (wireless) service provider operating said serving intermediate device (230), such that information relating to said service is informed to said subscribed user.

20 10. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of preceding Claims 1 to 5, the method further characterised by the step of:
accessing a database, by said mobile service 25 provider (112), wherein said database identifies a group of users (250-262) in a location that have registered an interest in said service provided by said mobile service provider (112);
downloading a list of said group of users (250- 30 262);
moving into said location by said mobile service provider (112); and

transmitting a wireless message to a number of said group of users directly by said mobile service provider (112) based on said downloaded list.

5 11. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of the preceding Claims, the method further characterised by the step of:

polling a number of communication devices in the same geographic area or cell where said mobile service provider (112) is located to determine whether any of said polled communication devices have registered an interest, for example within a device profile, to use a service offered by said mobile service provider (112).

15 12. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of the preceding Claims, the method further characterised by the step of:

notifying said number of communication devices in a location (210) of an event or an availability of said service at said location, via a short message service (SMS) message.

13. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of the preceding Claims, wherein said step of transmitting a wireless message is sent by said mobile service provider (112):

- (i) intermittently, or
- (ii) periodically, or
- (iii) during low traffic periods to utilise less expensive calling rates.

14. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of the preceding Claims 6 to 13, wherein said step of broadcasting a message of said availability of said mobile service provider (112) is sent by said serving intermediate device (230):

- (i) intermittently, or
- (ii) periodically, or
- (iii) during low traffic periods to utilise less expensive calling rates.

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15. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of preceding Claims 6 to 14, wherein said step of transmitting a wireless message is sent on the same wireless communication system, as said step of broadcasting a message of said availability.

16. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of preceding Claims 6 to 14, wherein said step of broadcasting a message of said availability is sent on an adjunct communication system, for example a Bluetooth™ system or a fixed communication system, to the communication system facilitating said step of transmitting a wireless message.

25 17. The method (300) of providing location based services according to any of preceding Claims 6 to 14, wherein said serving intermediate device, or a device operably coupled thereto, performs the step of:
authenticating said mobile service provider (112)
30 prior to said step of broadcasting said service of said mobile service provider (112).

18. A storage medium storing processor-implementable instructions adapted to control a processor to carry out the method of any of Claims 1 to 17.

5 19. A communication system adapted to facilitate a provision of mobile services according to any of method Claims 1 to 17.

10 20. The communication system according to Claim 19, wherein the communication system is one of a UMTS communication system, a GSM communication system, a GPRS communication system, a Bluetooth communication system.

15 21. A mobile service provider communication unit adapted to facilitate a provision of location-based mobile services according to any of method Claims 1 to 17.

20 22. The mobile service provider communication unit according to Claim 21, wherein the communication unit is one of: a cellular phone, a portable or mobile radio, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer or a wirelessly networked PC

25 23. A server, preferably a web-based server, adapted to facilitate a provision of mobile services according to any of method Claims 1 to 17.

30 24. A communication unit, comprising:
a processor (408); and
a transmitter, operably coupled to and responsive to said processor, wherein said processor is configured

to initiate transmission of a wireless message to a number of communication devices in a location (210), the communication unit characterised in that:
said processor generates said wireless message to
5 indicate a service to be provided by said communication unit (112) in said location (210).

25. The communication unit according to Claim 24, wherein said communication unit functions as a mobile
10 service provider advertising device and said wireless message includes one or more of the following: mobile service provider contact details, a service provided/offered by a user of the communication unit, a communication cell or geographical location of, or to be
15 visited by, the communication unit.

26. The communication unit according to Claim 24 or Claim 25, the communication unit further characterised by a receiver (410) and a memory unit (416), operably
20 coupled to said processor (408), said receiver (410) arranged to receive a list of subscriber groups that have registered an interest in the service offered by the mobile service provider in a particular geographic area or communication cell and said memory unit (416) is
25 configured to store said received list.

27. The communication unit according to any of claims 24 to 26, wherein the communication unit is one of: a cellular phone, a portable or mobile radio, a personal
30 digital assistant, a laptop computer or a wirelessly networked PC.

28. A Mobile Services Manager function (190) arranged
to facilitate a provision of location-based mobile
services according to any of method Claims 1 to 17 or
communicate with a communication unit according to any of
5 Claims 24 to 27.